

Gunmen attack police station, kill officers

- JTF uncovers bomb factory
- Nigeria safe, Presidency insists

From Njadvava Musa, Maiduguri

SUSPECTED *Boko Haram* gunmen yesterday attacked the Divisional Police Station in Gambouru/Ngala, Borno State, killing two officers, while residents fled into the bush for safety.

Gambouru/Ngala is a border town with Chad Republic; and 150 kilometres north of Maiduguri, the state capital.

The morning attack came barely two days after a similar assault at Damasak, a town in the state, that left some security officers dead.

However, President Goodluck Jonathan also yesterday insisted that the country remained safe in spite of bombings, and urged Nigerians not to entertain any fear in their daily activities.

Jonathan, in a statement by his Senior Special Assistant on Public Affairs, Dr. Doyin Okupe, stressed that insurgents worldwide audaciously attack institutions to kindle maximum fear among the citizenry.

On yesterday's attack, a resident, Bukar Aisami, said about 50 gunmen in vehicles and motorcycles attacked the police station, 700 metres from a military post, with Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and petrol-bombs, chanting "God is great" in Arabic, before killing the two policemen.

He said no civilian was killed, as most of the residents fled into the bush, adding: "We had to run for our lives, because we don't know who these gunmen were targeting, as they came in high number to attack us and the security personnel here in Gambouru/Ngala."

In neighbouring Yobe State, the Joint Task Force (JTF) uncovered a bomb-making factory in Damaturu, the capital, another hot-bed of the Islamist group.

The discovery followed the security task force's "cordon and search" operation in the early hours of yesterday at the Buhari Housing Estate, on Gashua-Maiduguri Ring Road.

In Damaturu, the JTF's spokesman, Lt. Lazarus Eli, said a decomposing body was also found buried within the factory premises, stating that it could be that of a suspected terrorist that died from gunshot wounds in a recent cross-fire.

He said other items recovered from the factory included bomb-making materials, arms and ammunition, magazines, as well as military, police and immigration uniforms.

He added that after a thorough search of the premises, two rifles, medical supplies

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and teargas canisters were also recovered.

He appealed to residents to be vigilant and report suspected persons to security agents for appropriate action to save people's lives and property.

President Jonathan, who recalled when the Irish Republican Army (IRA) bombed the hotel in which the then British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher and core members

of her cabinet were holding a meeting, said it was not surprising that such strategic places were attacked in Nigeria.

According to him: "It is not surprising therefore that as a consequence of the recent activities of the insurgents; some dailies reported that 'nowhere is safe in Nigeria.' In truth and in reality this statement is not correct.

"President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, GCFR, wishes to as-

sure Nigerians that in spite of this situation, the country is still largely safe and secure.

"President Jonathan wishes to state categorically of his unwavering commitment and determination to fight insecurity wherever they are found in Nigeria."

He assured that the Jonathan administration was prepared to enhance and ensure the security of lives and property of all Nigerians, irrespective of their locations within the

country.

Okupe explained that government has acquired and deployed highly sophisticated security equipment and members of the security agencies have received and continue to receive adequate training such that intelligence gathering capacity has witnessed a monumental increase in recent time.

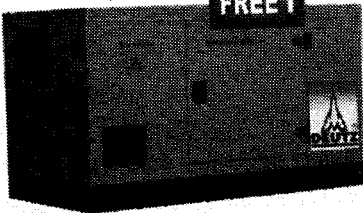

Okupe stated that this was responsible for the reduction in over 70 per cent of the activities of the *Boko Haram* and other sinister plans before they occur.

He said unfortunately, such feats are not made known to members of the public. He also urged the media to join hands with government and key-in into the transformation agenda, while ensuring that sensational reports that could tarnish Nigeria's image and bring the country into disrepute and create anxiety and panic are avoided.

He added: "We should not allow fear and despair to overcome us rather we should draw strength from our well-known spirit of nationalism and forbearance to support the government and the security agencies in their effort to curb the menace."

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